

Library Bond Act Grant Applications - Cycle 1

Office of Library Construction Findings

Project Name [Number]	Belmont Library 1044	Current Square Footage	5,684
Applicant	Belmont, City of	Project Square Footage	28,220
Operating Library Jurisdiction	San Mateo County Library District	Service Area Population:	25,123
Project Type	New Library	Anticipated Construction Start Date:	6/8/2004
Project Priority	1st	Total Project Amount	\$17,835,952
Joint Use Type	Joint Venture	State Grant Amount	\$10,610,853
Multipurpose?	NO		
Leased Site:	NO		

Bond Act Factors [California Code of Regulations Title 5, Section 19998 (a)]

	Rated	Other
Needs of urban and rural areas:		[see map]
Population growth:		12%
Financial capacity of applicant to open and maintain operation of the library (new libraries only):		Yes
Age and condition of existing library:	Poor Condition (= Very Good)	
Inadequacy of the existing library in meeting needs of residents and the response of proposed project to meeting the needs:	Acceptable	
Plan of Service integrates appropriate electronic technology:	Acceptable	
Appropriateness of proposed site for the proposed project:	Outstanding	
Overall Rating:		Acceptable

Summary of Review Panel Comments

Population Growth 11.8%

Age and Condition The library was built in 1960 and was renovated in 1982. Major deficiencies of the existing library: leaking roof; single pane windows allowing solar gain and heat loss; lack of staff and delivery entrance; non-compliance with ADA codes; limited physical flexibility to arrange functional spaces more effectively; inadequate lighting; inadequate technology infrastructure; inadequate mechanical system; lack of a meeting room/programming space; and inadequate space of services and functions.

Needs of residents/response of proposed project to needs The needs assessment process included creating a community-based library task force, and gathering input from residents via focus groups; stakeholder and staff interviews; and a community survey to prioritize a list of selected library services; community meetings; and a special input mechanism for children, allowing them to write or draw their ideas about the new library; and a teacher/parent survey. The project assessed student needs well, and appropriate services are planned to respond to the findings.

The plan of service accurately reflects the findings of the needs assessment, which is the need for a larger facility in which to provide adequate basic library services. Goals are briefly stated, and objectives and service indicator have been combined. Service indicators are statistical and do not provide for qualitative assessment of the services.

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The building program implements the plan of service, including and describing spaces to provide the required services. Space adjacencies are adequately described via a single-page graphic. The building program does not include telecommunication wiring or equipment in either the homework center or the tutoring rooms, which seems to be an oversight and a detriment to providing homework assistance and future flexibility for the room.

The conceptual plans appear to adhere to the building program, but square footages are given only for broad service areas, not for individual spaces as provided in the building program. To compare the building program to the floor plans, the corresponding areas in the building program must be manually calculated. Building sections appear on the same page with their corresponding elevation, assisting the reviewer in getting an overall understanding.

Joint use agreement: Computer Center & Homework Center The city and county have two joint use agreements, one with each of two school districts in the service area, with each demonstrating little more than an agreement to use the completed facility and provide input on its services to students. This is the type of communication that already exists between most public libraries in the course of providing library services to its service area clientele. The services are vaguely described as "homework and technology support." It appears that there is no dedicated staff or specified number of volunteers to provide assistance in the computer and homework centers. Funding is mentioned only in terms of identifying the agency that will operate the facility.

Plan of Service Integrates Appropriate Technology Technology is adequately addressed throughout most of the planning documents. The plan of service indicates that the homework center will provide access to word processing and other educational software, but this is missing from the space description in the building program, which indicates only tables and chairs to be provided. In addition, there is no PC wiring or equipment in the tutoring spaces. Design features to enable use of future technologies such as a raised flooring system and wireless cabling placed in the ceiling are mentioned in the plan of service but are mentioned only in passing in the building program. Specific technology applications included are: CCTV for use by those with visual disabilities; Internet access; assistive software for the OPAC; training in the use of software and the Internet; and self-checkout stations.

Appropriateness of Proposed Site The proposed site is also the current library site, which is surrounded by multi-family housing. The location is central both geographically and in terms of the population distribution. It's within a 5-10 minute drive from all civic, business and shopping areas as well as schools, with 2 schools being within a 3 block area. While the library is on a hillside, paths, stairways and ramps to the main entrance are provided from the street and from the parking garage. This is a mitigation measure, but it will be moderately inconvenient to the "substantial portion of library users" who will walk or bicycle to the library. There are 2 public transit stops within 1/4 mile of the site, with one being directly in front of the building. On-site parking will be placed under the building to preserve the oak trees on the site. The essentially square shape of the site provides for few planning limitations. Surrounding area is residential, providing convenient access for a large number of residents. Pedestrian and bicycle paths are planned.

Financial Capacity The applicant has committed to the on-going operation of the completed library.